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ABSTRACT

This study surveyed the faculty at a moderate sized Midwestern university about their job satisfaction and the influence of the faculty union and the university administration on their job satisfaction. A total of 203 of 582 full-time faculty responded to the mailed survey questionnaire. It found that faculty members were generally more satisfied with union influence on non-monetary aspects of their job than with union influence on monetary aspects. Levels of satisfaction with union and administration influence were quite similar, except that faculty were more satisfied with union than administration influence on monthly salary and representation of the faculty interest in the state legislature. Those faculty who strongly favored being represented by the union were much more satisfied with union influence than with administrative influence. Faculty as a whole tended to be more satisfied with union and administration influence on those particular aspects of their jobs with which they were most satisfied. (MDM)

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Faculty Satisfaction with the Influence of a Union and the Administration on Aspects of Academic Jobs

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ABSTRACT

Data from full-time faculty members, at a university in which faculty members are represented by a faculty union, indicate they are slightly more satisfied with non-monetary aspects of their jobs than with monetary aspects. Faculty were asked to indicate how satisfied they were with the influence on these job aspects by both a faculty union and the administration. Results show that overall the faculty are about equally satisfied with the influence they perceive by the union and the administration, though those faculty who strongly favor being represented by the union are much more satisfied with union influence than administrative influence. Faculty tend to be more satisfied with influence of both types on those particular aspects of their jobs with which they are most satisfied.

Faculty Satisfaction with the Influence of a Union and the Administration on Aspects of Academic Jobs

Unions have been, and continue to be, a ubiquitous phenomenon in our society. For many years, university faculty often resisted joining unions. Recently collective bargaining has become more popular in institutions of higher education. The number of faculty unions on college campuses and the number of faculty members belonging to these unions have increased dramatically during the past 10 years (Kemerer and Baldridge, 1975). Researchers are beginning to study aspects of union influence and member attitudes toward unions.

The existence of a faculty union positively relates to faculty members' satisfaction with pay (Gomez-Mejia and Balkin, 1984). More recently, unions have expanded their focus from a primary emphasis on salary to an extended interest in other non-monetary aspects of faculty jobs such as personnel decisions and curriculum issues (Williams and Zirkel, 1988).

Elmuti and Kathawala (1991) examined faculty members' job satisfaction scores and found full-time faculty members, at a university which had been represented by collective bargaining for 13 years, described mixed feelings about their satisfaction with union impact on various aspects of compensation. Respondents in their study indicated their satisfaction levels with aspects of both monetary and non-monetary factors all correlated at low to moderate levels. About a third of the respondents indicated they were satisfied with union influence on monetary components. Slightly more of the respondents (38%-40%) were satisfied with union influence on various personnel criteria. The facet on which the greatest number of respondents were satisfied with union influence (48%) was the representation of the faculty interest in the state legislature.

This study will provide a replication of the Elmuti and Kathawala research at another university. It will then extend their analysis by examining a) general satisfaction levels with job facets, and b) satisfaction levels of administrative and union influence on each of the job aspects.

Methodology

Respondents and Procedures

Respondents were 203 of 582 full-time faculty members at a moderate sized (about 11,000 students) comprehensive midwestern university where the faculty have been represented by a faculty union since 1976. This university is a "sister" institution and is very similar to the one used in Elmuti and Kathawala. The faculty at these two institutions are represented by the same faculty union which has a common agreement/contract with the five universities in the governing system.

Questionnaires were sent to all full-time faculty members in the collective bargaining unit. Self reported demographic data for the faculty members who responded to the survey is very similar to actual demographic data for full time faculty members at the university. Table 1 shows demographic statistics for the sample. Respondents were 73% male and primarily middle-aged. Nearly half of all respondents represented the college of arts and sciences (of six academic colleges), and slightly less than half were at the rank of full professor. Over a third of the faculty included in this study had been employed at the university for over 20 years, and almost half had salaries in excess of $40,000.

Questionnaires were sent to each faculty member with a cover letter requesting respondents to return the completed surveys, anonymously, to the first author. In addition to instructions, the information to faculty members indicated the study was being conducted for research purposes only, and it was not intended to influence respondents either for or against the faculty union or the university administration.

Survey Items

One section of the survey was a satisfaction instrument (Likert, 1967) on which faculty members were asked to indicate their levels of satisfaction with specific aspects of their academic jobs. They were also asked to rate the faculty union influence and the university administration influence on each of these job facets The parts of this study which measured satisfaction level with union influence represents replication of Elmuti and Kathawala.

Another section included demographic items. The majority of these items were direct replications of those included in the Elmuti and Kathawala study. In addition, respondents were asked to

indicate their status as dues paying or fair share union members and their status as tenure track or temporary bargaining unit affiliation. Two 5-point Likert items were included which focused on respondents attitudes toward being represented by a union in general and on the particular union which represents the faculty. These items that did not replicate Elmuti and Kathawala are included at the end of Table 1.

Results

The purpose of replicating the Elmuti and Kathawala (1991) study was to determine if similar results would be obtained at the two universities in terms of respondents' levels of satisfaction with union influence on various aspects of their jobs. Table 2 provides a comparison between the Elmuti and Kathawala data and the present results. Examination of this table indicates that a smaller percentage of respondents expressed satisfaction with union influence than in the Elmuti and Kathawala study for all but three aspects of the job (monthly salary, sick leave, and academic freedom). In terms of dissatisfaction, a larger percentage of the subjects in the present study were dissatisfied with union influence for nine of the fifteen categories.

Elmuti and Kathawala also reported a correlation matrix between demographic variables and union influence satisfaction levels with each of the individual job aspects. In a replication of that analysis, our data showed that of 105 correlations between demographic items and the level of satisfaction with union influence on job aspects, only five were significant at the p=.05 level. Of these, four were related to attitudes about faculty excellence awards standards. The significant correlations indicated that older, longer employed, higher ranking and higher paid faculty members were less satisfied with union influence on faculty excellence award standards than younger, newer faculty. Other than the significant correlations, the correlations in this study were generally lower than those reported by Elmuti and Kathawala.

In this study, the scales for satisfaction were expanded to include a general satisfaction score for each job aspect and the respondent's satisfaction with administrative as well as union influence. Table 3 provides results for all job satisfaction items for the present study. In general, faculty members appear to be more satisfied with non-monetary aspects of their jobs than with the monetary aspects. The job aspect on which they were most satisfied was sick leave. This is a monetary aspect of the job in which the

positive sentiments may be due to the sick leave payout instituted by the state legislature with little influence by either union or administration. They were least satisfied with faculty representation in the state legislature, summer school courses and the allocation of research resources.

The levels of satisfaction regarding influence by the administration and the union on the various job aspects were generally quite similar. A series of t-tests were calculated, comparing the mean level of influence satisfaction for union and administration for each job aspect (see Table 3). Of the fifteen aspects, six results in significant differences. Respondents were significantly more satisfied with union influence on monthly salary, medical benefits, work load, and representation of the faculty in the state legislature. They were more satisfied with administration influence on promotion criteria and tenure criteria.

Six internal consistency reliability analyses were conducted in order to examine the similarity of attitudes toward various job aspects. Three alpha reliabilities were calculated using the set of the five individual monetary items; once for general satisfaction, and once each for satisfaction with the union and with the administration influence. Three parallel analyses were also conducted for the set of ten non-monetary items. The resulting six combination indices demonstrated acceptable to very good alpha reliabilities and were used as summated scales in additional analyses. Table 4 includes reliabilities, means, and standard deviations of these scales. Results of t-tests comparing differential levels of satisfaction with influence by the union and the administration on the summated monetary and non-monetary scales indicate that faculty members are not differentially satisfied with union and administration influence on non-monetary aspects of their jobs ($t=.65$, $p = .52$). However, the faculty are more satisfied with the union influence on monetary aspects of their jobs ($x = 14.12$) than the administration influence ($x = 13.51$) on them ($t = 2.31$, $p = .02$). Faculty members were asked to indicate their sentiments toward being represented by a union in general and toward being represented by this particular union. Those scores were correlated with satisfaction scales. Sentiments toward being represented by any union correlate positively with satisfaction with union influence on monetary job aspects ($r = .30$, $p < .001$) and with satisfaction with union influence on non-monetary job aspects ($r = .47$, $p < .001$). Sentiments toward being represented by this particular union resulted in even higher positive correlations with these variables (

union monetary influence: $r = .47$, $p < .001$; and union non-monetary influence: $r = .54$, $p < .001$). Attitudes toward being represented by a union do not correlate with either general satisfaction levels, or with satisfaction with administrative influence on job aspects.

Faculty members were asked if they are dues paying members of the union, which is a voluntary option, or if they are fair share contributors. A series of t-tests comparing members to fair-share contributors (see Table 5) illustrates that voluntary union members are more satisfied with union influence on both monetary and non-monetary aspects of the job. These two groups, however, are not differentially satisfied on aspects of the job per se, or on administration influence on job aspects.

The faculty members were asked to indicate if they were employed at the university in a tenured/tenure track status or on a temporary appointment. A series of t-tests comparing the 172 tenure track faculty to the 15 temporary respondents in terms of their scores on the summated monetary and non-monetary satisfaction and influence on satisfaction scores resulted in no significant differences. Temporary faculty who responded to this survey hold attitudes very similar to tenure track and tenured faculty respondents.

Discussion

The results of the current study match those found by Elmuti and Kathawala (1991) fairly consistently. In both studies, faculty members were generally more satisfied with union influence on non-monetary aspects of their jobs than with monetary aspects. The data from the current study, though similar across types of job aspects, was somewhat different in terms of percentage of faculty members who were satisfied. Elmuti and Kathawala found that about one third of respondents were satisfied with union influence on monetary aspects of their jobs, and about a third were dissatisfied. Slightly more than a third generally were satisfied with union influence on non-monetary aspects of the jobs. In the present study, a smaller portion of respondents were satisfied with union influence on both types of job aspects. Here, about one third were satisfied with union influence on non-monetary aspects, and generally fewer were satisfied with this influence on monetary aspects (though these five numbers ranged from 18% to 40%).

Several reasons may explain this slight negative change in satisfaction with union influence.

The two sets of data were collected from different universities, and, although these universities are in the same system of universities in the same state, the natural differences between universities may account for the difference in satisfaction results.

Events during the timing of the two studies may also provide an explanation. During the year previous to data collection in the present study, the union and administration negotiated the contract for a four year period, and the union seriously considered calling a strike. They did call for a strike vote which was supported, but a contract was settled prior to an actual work stoppage. Although these events occurred nearly a year before this data was sought, the intensity of that situation led many faculty members to examine more closely their attitudes about the union and the administration. Because of that experience and the resultant heightened focus on union/administration interaction, many faculty members are less certain about both union and administration functioning. Negativity often results in situations of uncertainty, and this may be shown in the present data.

Finally, differences in attitudes toward union influence may have resulted because of differences in respondents. Examination of the demographic data suggest that in the current study, a larger percentage of the respondents were in the 45-54 age category, made more money and were of higher rank. It may be that the more advanced faculty members are less satisfied with union influence than are the newer faculty members. This difference in respondent type might explain the differences in correlations between demographics and union influence satisfaction as well.

This study extended the Elmuti and Kathawala study by asking faculty to describe their satisfaction with influence on job aspects by the administration. It is interesting to note that levels of satisfaction with union influence and with administrative influence were quite similar. Only two areas showed any real difference. Faculty were more satisfied with union than administrative influence on monthly salary. Most faculty consider this issue to be the union's primary interest. The other issue on which faculty were more satisfied with union influence was representation of the faculty interest in the state legislature. At the time of data collection for this study, the board of higher education for the state was calling for universities to cut programs. They had specified particular programs for each campus and many faculty members were considering to what extent the board had the authority, as provided by the state legislature, to require program eliminations. The union, during this period, was sponsoring open sessions for faculty to

comment on the proposed program cuts and the process by which those programs were selected. In this system, the union has traditionally highlighted their legislative influence action and has encouraged faculty members to join in their efforts during times of special tension. In addition, legislative representation has long been an issue which many faculty feel needs more administrative attention.

This study also included items which asked respondents to describe their level of satisfaction with the job aspect itself, not just union influence on that aspect. The results here are quite enlightening. The level of satisfaction with the job aspect itself nearly parallels the level of satisfaction with influence on that job aspect. This pattern fails to appear for only a few of the job aspects. Oone is sick leave, for which payouts were mandated by the state legislature. This pattern of results suggests that it is satisfaction with job aspects which are primary, and satisfaction with agent influence on these aspects may just be an artifact of these attitudes.

It is interesting to examine the reliabilities in this study which resulted from combining individual items into monetary and non-monetary summated scales. These analyses indicate that in each of these categories, the satisfaction itself and the agent influence satisfaction levels were very similar within the particular aspects of the general category. That is, respondents were about equally satisfied with monthly salary, medical and retirement benefits, etc. With only a few exceptions, faculty apparently do not distinguish a great deal among individual aspects of monetary or non-monetary satisfaction.

Finally, it is important to realize that the union has little impact on some of the job aspects included in this study. For example, the union has no contractually negotiated influence on medical benefits, retirement program benefits, summer school courses, or allocation of research resources. Yet, faculty report the same levels of satisfaction with union influence on those aspects as other aspects which the union does have influence. It may be that faculty realize this and took it into account when responding to the survey. More likely, many faculty members do not realize which aspects of their jobs the union is able to influence. In addition, the administration does not display overt action on some of the job aspects athough ultimately it is responsible for them. Again, patterns in the levels of satisfaction do not match patterns in the aspects of jobs which administration focuses on more actively.

Results of this study generally suggest that university faculty members value both union and administrative influence on their job aspects to the extent that they are satisfied with those particular job

aspects. Strong union supporters are more satisfied with union influence overall, and faculty members are generally more satisfied with non-monetary than monetary aspects of their jobs.

In some ways the data collected in this study is confusing. It is difficult to determine exactly which cognitions and/or attitudes faculty members are considering for items such as the manner in which curriculum issues are determined and academic freedom. Satisfaction scores for those items may indicate faculty members' general understanding of these processes and their level of satisfaction with each process. This type of data, though, cannot provide a basis for an understanding of what faculty members believe these processes to be. However, patterns of results are quite consistent with previous research, so that results may be reliable, even if the validity is somewhat unclear.

Faculty unions are increasing their direct influence on university policies in personnel, curriculum, work load, and a variety of other areas. As this influence grows, indirect influence is also experienced in areas such as enrollment management, assessment, and institutional effectiveness. Much of the work of institutional researchers will be impacted by results of faculty union bargaining with university administration.

Strategic planning and speedy, effective decisions which are an anticipated result of such planning will need to include action implications based on faculty attitudes. These attitudes, in terms of satisfaction as shown in this study, are highly related to faculty satisfaction with union functioning as well as with administrative functioning.

Institutional researchers are being asked to provide data to the university administration and to unions so that accurate bases for policy decisions on both sides are developed. To the extent that unions collect and interpret their own data, discrepancies in data bases and analysis may lead to poor decision making between the two parties. Institutional researchers may want to seek opportunities to provide data to faculty unions if that process has not yet been implemented.

The university culture is clearly affected by faculty union actions and faculty member's individual and collective attitudes toward these activities. Faculty unions have developed a major role in university functioning, and attitudes of both the union leaders, which constitute official union policy, and attitudes of other faculty members, which may or may not match union policy, need to be taken into consideration.

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Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents in Percentages of Respondents

Gender	
Male	73.2
Female	26.8
Age	
34 or under	7.1
35 to 44	30.5
45 to 54	38.1
55 to 64	21.8
65 and over	2.5
Marital Status	
Married	77.4
Other	22.6
Years of Experience at this university	
4 or fewer	20.9
5 to 9	19.9
10 to 14	11.4
15 to 19	12.4
20 or more	35.3
Teaching Rank	
Instructor	10.0
Assistant Professor	23.6
Associate Professor	22.9
Professor	43.4
College Represented	
Applied Sciences	8.6
Arts and Sciences	48.0
Business	8.1
Education	17.2
Fine Arts	5.6
Health, PE, Rec	10.6
Other	2.0
Current Salary	
Under $25,000	6.0
$25,000 - $29,999	13.9
$30,000 - $34,999	17.4
$35,000 - $39,999	16.4
$40,000 - $44,999	22.9
$45,000 or more	23.4

Table 1 - Continued

Union Unit Status		Union Member Status	
Tenure/track/Tenured	91.0%	Dues Paying Member	53.5%
Temporary	9.0%	Fair Share Contributer	46.5%

	Mean	S.D.
Overall Sentiments about being represented by a union (1-5)	2.86	1.2
Overal Sentiments about being represented by this union	2.77	1.2

Table 2

Comparison of Elmuti and Kathawala (1991) and Current Data (1993)

	Union Influence: Percentage Expressing			
	Satisfaction		Dissatisfaction	
	1991**	1993	1991**	1993
MONETARY CONSIDERATIONS				
a. Monthly Salary*	33.6	36.9	31.4	38.5
b. Medical Benefits	34	24.0	32	38.2
c. Faculty Excellence Awards Standards*	32.6	18.9	31	40.0
d. Retirement Program Benefits	36.6	21.4	25	30.5
e. Sick Leave	34	40.1	34	14.4
NONMONETARY CONSIDERATIONS				
a. Promotion Criteria	40	32.8	23	36.0
b. Tenure Criteria	38	35.7	29	27.4
c. Termination-for-Cause Criteria	38	31.0	24	20.4
d. Work Load: Teaching	35.6	34.9	25	37.4
e. Summer School Courses	32	14.2	29	39.3
f. Manner in Which Curriculum Issues are Determined	22	20.3	31	21.9
g. Administative Duties for Faculty	26	11.2	32	22.5
h. Allocation of Research Resources	22	9.4	30	38.9
i. Representation of Faculty Interest in State Legislature	42	36.1	20	33.5
j. Academic Freedom	32	53.4	38	14.0

** Data from Elmuti and Kathawala, 1991

* Slight wording change from 1991 study

Table 3

Satisfaction with Job Aspects, and Union and Administration Influence on those Aspects of Jobs

		Satisfaction with Influence by:		
	General Satisfaction	Faculty Union	Administration	t-value
MONETARY CONSIDERATIONS				
a. Monthly Salary	2.6 (1.1)#	2.9 (1.2)	2.3 (1.0)	-5.4***
b. Medical Benefits	2.8 (1.2)	2.7 (1.1)	2.5 (1.0)	2.20*
c. Faculty Excellence Awards Standards	2.8 (1.2)	2.6 (1.1)	2.7 (1.2)	- .34
d. Retirement Program Benefits	2.9 (1.0)	2.8 (1.0)	2.7 (1.0)	1.48
e. Sick Leave	3.7 (1.0)	3.3 (1.0)	3.3 (1.0)	- .82
NONMONETARY CONSIDERATIONS				
a. Promotion Criteria	3.2 (1.1)	2.9 (1.2)	3.0 (1.1)	-2.47**
b. Tenure Criteria	3.3 (1.1)	3.0 (1.1)	3.2 (1.0)	-2.26*
c. Termination-for-Cause Criteria	3.2 (0.9)	3.1 (1.0)	3.0 (1.0)	- .08
d. Work Load: Teaching	3.1 (1.1)	2.9 (1.1)	2.7 (1.1)	2.02*
e. Summer School Courses	2.5 (1.2)	2.5 (1.1)	2.4 (1.1)	1.48
f. Manner in Which Curriculum Issues are Determined	3.1 (1.0)	2.9 (0.9)	2.8 (1.0)	.72
g. Administative Duties for Faculty	2.9 (0.8)	2.8 (0.8)	2.8 (0.8)	- .36
h. Allocation of Research Resources	2.5 (1.0)	2.5 (1.0)	2.5 (1.1)	.43
i. Representation of Faculty Interest in State Legislature	2.4 (1.0)	3.0 (1.2)	2.3 (1.0)	6.04***
j. Academic Freedom	3.8 (0.9)	3.5 (1.1)	3.5 (1.1)	- .21

#Mean (Standard Deviation) Responses range from 1= Very Dissatisfied to 5 = Very Satisfied

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Table 4

Alpha Reliabilities, Means and Standard Deviations of Summated Satisfaction Scales

	Reliability	Mean	Standard Deviation
Monetary Satisfaction	.56	14.8	3.4
Non-monetary Satisfaction	.74	30.4	5.5
Union Influence on Monetary Satisfaction	.76	14.1	3.9
Union Influence on Non-monetary Satisfaction	.87	28.8	7.2
Administration Influence on Monetary Satisfaction	.65	13.5	3.5
Administration Influence on Non-monetary Satisfaction	.79	28.4	5.7

Table 5

Comparison Between Union Members and Fair Share Contributers

	Means		
	Members	Fair Share	t-value
Monetary Satisfaction	14.7	14.7	.06
Non-monetary Satisfaction	30.1	30.8	- .85
Union Influence on Monetary Satisfaction	15.3	12.9	4.12**
Union Influence on Non-monetary Satisfaction	30.9	26.7	3.97**
Administration Influence on Monetary Satisfaction	13.7	13.3	.72
Administration Influence on Non-monetary Satisfaction	28.3	28.5	-.23